

## **FACT SHEET - The Status of Migrant Canada Geese, August 2005**

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- Migrant Canada geese from the Atlantic Population declined significantly from the mid-1980's through the mid-1990s. The hunting season for these geese was closed in 1995 to allow the population to recover as fast as possible. The population rebounded quickly and a limited hunting season was re-opened in 1999. Virginia held a 6-day season with a 1-geese bag limit during the 1999 and 2000 seasons, and a 30-day season with a 1-geese limit in 2001. As the population increased, the season was extended to 45 days in 2002 and 2003, while the bag limit remained at 1 per day. In 2004, the season remained at 45 days but a 2 geese daily bag was allowed for the last 20 days of the season.
- The number of breeding pairs counted on the spring survey has increased significantly since 1995. Good production from 1997-2001 has spurred population recovery. This year's breeding population estimate was 162,396, a slight decrease from last year, however, the survey was a bit late this year and may be biased low. The population is above the threshold that would allow a 2 bird/day bag.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PAIRS</u>
1988	118,031
1993	91,307
1994	40,086
1995	29,302 (season closed)
1996	46,058 “ “
1997	63,216 “ “
1998	42,166** (incomplete survey)
1999	77,451 (season reopened)
2000	93,230
2001	146,662
2002	164,840
2003	156,937
2004	174,793
2005	162,395

- Early snow melt allowed for early nest initiation and good to excellent production in the Ungava Peninsula of Quebec this year. Mean clutch size (4.43) was 9% above average and mean hatch date was earlier than normal. Production is therefore expected to be good to excellent this year.
- The framework for the 2005-2006 season remains at 45 days, but includes an expanded bag limit of 2 geese per day for the entire season for the Chesapeake Region (MD, DE, and VA). The Mid-Atlantic Region (NY, PA, NJ) harvests a smaller proportion of migrant geese, thus the framework in this Region allows a 3-bird bag limit this year. Back Bay, Virginia will be permitted a 15-day 1 bird bag this year. This is the first season on the waters of Back Bay since 1989.
- An Interim Harvest Strategy has been developed by the Atlantic Flyway Council to provide guidance while the Atlantic Population Canada Goose Management Plan is being revised. This strategy sets guidelines for hunting regulations (harvest rates) based on breeding population size.